

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETEL, EFIN, PGOV, CA

SUBJECT: BORDER BROADCASTING AND C-58

REF: PLACKE/MONROE TELCON, 1/20/78

1. CONGRESSMAN COHEN AND SENATOR MUSKIE HAVE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE ADVERSE IMPACT OF C-58 ON RADIO STATION WQDY LOCATED IN CALAIS, MAINE. THERE ARE NO CANADIAN STATIONS IN THE VICINITY AND WQDY HAS FOR YEARS PROVIDED A PUBLIC SERVICE FACILITY FOR ITS CANADIAN LISTENERS. OVER 40 PERCENT OF THE STATION'S ADVERTISING REVENUE COMES FROM CANADIAN SOURCES AND THE LOSS OF BUSINESS CAUSED BY THE C-58 SERIOUSLY THREATENS THE STATION'S FUTURE.

2. CORRESPONDENCE PROVIDED BY THE STATION INDICATES THAT CANADIAN SENATOR ROBICHAUD WROTE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS SAUVE IN DECEMBER 1976 ON BEHALF OF WQDY. THE MINISTER'S RESPONSE POINTED OUT THAT THE INCOME TAX ACT MUST BE
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APPLIED IN A NONDISCRIMINATORY FASHION ACROSS-THE-BOARD AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE LAW WOULD ENCOURAGE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CANADIAN RADIO STATIONS TO SERVE AREAS SUCH AS THE ST. CROIX VALLEY. IN PASSING THE MINISTER'S LETTER BACK TO THE DIRECTOR OF WQDY, ROBICHAUD SUGGESTED THAT THE STATION CONTACT HIM AGAIN WITHIN SIX MONTHS.

3. SINCE WQDY'S SERVICES HAVE NO COMPETITIVE IMPACT ON THE CANADIAN MARKET AND PROVIDE AN IMPORTANT SERVICE TO CANADIAN CITIZENS, WE BELIEVE THE STATION'S UNUSUAL SITUATION MERITS AN APPROACH TO THE CANADIANS TO DETERMINE WHETHER A REGULATORY EXCEPTION TO C-58 MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. WE RECOGNIZE THAT A FAVORABLE GOC RESPONSE IS UNLIKELY IN VIEW OF THE PREVIOUS POSITION TAKEN BY MINISTER SAUVE, BUT CONSIDER THAT AN EXPRESSION OF OFFICIAL INTEREST IS CALLED FOR, AND MIGHT UNCOVER POSSIBILITIES. IF GENERAL RELIEF FOR WQDY IS NOT LEGALLY POSSIBLE, PERHAPS INTERIM MEASURES COULD BE WORKED OUT TO APPLY UNTIL COMPETITIVE CANADIAN SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE. ACCORDINGLY, THE EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO RAISE THIS MATTER WITH THE APPROPRIATE CANADIAN AUTHORITIES, DRAWING ON THE ABOVE, AND TO REPORT THE RESULTS OF ITS DEMARCHES.

4. FYI. WE HAVE WRITTEN CONGRESSMAN COHEN AND SENATOR MUSKIE THAT WE SEE LITTLE PROSPECT OF RELIEF FOR STATION WQDY BUT ARE PREPARED TO RAISE THE MATTER WITH THE GOC. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT THE STATION CONTINUE TO WORK THROUGH ITS LOCAL CANADIAN SUPPORTERS, AS NO RELIEF CAN BE EXPECTED WITHOUT STRONG LOCAL SUPPORT FROM CANADIAN SOURCES. END FYI.

5. RELEVANT CORRESPONDENCE BEING POUCHED. VANCE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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